
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2019

Fiscal Services Division

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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Family Support Subsidy

Background

The Family Support Subsidy appropriation includes two programs: Family Support Subsidy (FSS) and Children at Home (CAH). These programs assist families of children with developmental disabilities to meet the special needs of their disabled children and are administered by the Department of Human Services.

Services Provided and Populations Served

The FSS Program provided a \$296 monthly payment to participating families in FY 2017 to be used to support the families in raising their developmentally disabled child at home. Families receive the benefit until the eligible child turns 18. Approximately half of the families served through the FSS have a household income of less than \$30,000 per year. The FSS provides resources for families under the following conditions:

- Include children (under age 18) living at home with a developmental disability that results in substantial functional limitation in three or more areas of major life activity.
- Have income below \$40,000 Adjusted Gross Income (AGI).

The FSS Program began in 1987 as a means of reducing barriers to raising children with developmental disabilities at home. In FY 2010, State legislation ended new enrollment. The Program is expected to continue until 2024 (when the last enrollee turns 18 years of age).

The CAH Program provides cash for particular needs as they arise within funding parameters allowed by the Program. Adaptive equipment, special clothing, dietary needs, counseling, parent training, and respite care are some examples of allowable expenses. The CAH provides resources for families under the following conditions:

- Include a person or persons under 21 years of age with a disability who live at home, or with a discharge plan for the person to return home within 60 calendar days.
- Have an AGI below \$60,000.
- Reside in one of the 23 counties currently served by the Program.

Local parent councils participate in the decision-making process for the distribution of funds. A funding cap per child per year is established by local advisory boards. The CAH Program is currently available in 23 counties. In FY 2017, funding was transferred to the Iowa Department of Public Health for the purpose of expanding the Program to serve all 99 Iowa counties.

More Information

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Funding

The Family Support Subsidy General Fund appropriation is included in the Health and Human Services Appropriations Act and has averaged \$1.1 million annually for the five-year period from FY 2012 to FY 2017. The two programs in this budget unit are funded only with State General Fund dollars.

The average annual cost per child of providing FSS services in FY 2017 was \$3,554. The average annual cost per child of providing CAH services in FY 2017 was \$943. The amount allocated for administrative costs at the State level was set at \$25,000 by the General Assembly in 1988 and has remained at that level.

Funding for the FSS Program is gradually decreasing as there are no new enrollees and participants eventually age out of the Program. At times, the General Assembly has chosen to use these savings to expand the CAH Program.

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has partnered with Visiting Nurse Services to develop statewide standardized payment levels for individual requests and service needs. IDPH implemented a cap of \$700 that can be spent per child for FY 2018. Multiple payments may be made on behalf of the same child, but the combined amount cannot exceed the cap.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code section [225C.47](#)